1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

example, they describe an adolescent girl as one whose breasts are beginning to grow.

The Kwoma class a person as an infant as long as he still suckles. He remains in this category from two to four years, depending upon various contingencies such as his health or the birth of a younger sibling.[9] The weaning period, the transition between infancy and childhood, lasts from one to two years. A Kwoma is usually somewhere between four and six years of age before he is established as a child. The childhood category for boys runs from the end of weaning to the first initiation into the age-grade cycle, which roughly coincides with pubescence. A girl enters adolescence with the ceremony that is held at first menstruation. The period of adolescence extends from the end of childhood to a ceremony in which the boy or the girl is cicatrized. This takes place at about sixteen or seventeen, usually just before marriage for the boy and just after marriage for the girl. All persons who have been cicatrized are classified as adults.[10]

In addition to the maturation hierarchy, there is a system of age grades. A boy is initiated into the first of the four grades at adolescence, and into each of the next higher grades at approximately five-year intervals thereafter. While he is a member of each grade, he is permitted to wear a type of hair ornament which symbolizes his position.

In addition to the categories based on kinship, locality, and age, the Kwoma divide themselves into a variety of groups for the purpose of carrying out economic activities. A brother and sister before they are married, or a husband and wife after marriage, constitute a team to extract sago flour. The households of two or more brothers, or of a father

[9] Although a mother is theoretically prohibited from indulging in sexual intercourse while she is still nursing an infant, not all mothers abide by this rule.

[10] The aged also form a group which properly belongs in the maturation hierarchy. They have been arbitrarily excluded from this study. Old age begins technically when a person has gone through the age-grade cycle first as an initiate and then as an initiator. This puts it at approximately fifty years.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 1]

[p.106]

CHAPTER VI

ADULTHOOD

884 304 AKWOMA boy becomes an adult[1] when he receives the keloids which are a symbol of manhood. The scarification ceremony[2] occurs when he has grown to full stature and is ready to marry.[3] This initiation takes place at one of the house tamberans where all the boys of the proper age are operated on at a single ceremony. Each boy, when his turn comes, lies on a sago spathe. While the father of his [606] future wife holds his hands, a special operator incises two semicircular cuts above each nipple and rubs ashes into them [608] to make a raised scar. All boys who are cut on the same spathe become *friends*, a relationship established by the mixture of their blood which it is believed makes them "one blood" like *brothers*.

A girl enters adulthood in a slightly different and less public manner. She also is cut with other girls of her age, to each [608] of whom she becomes a *friend;* but the operation takes place at the dwelling of the operator, instead of the house tamberan, and the design of her keloid is an elaborate circular figure centered about the navel. I do not know who holds her hands during the operation.

885 593 By the time a Kwoma man has become adult, he has learned most of the techniques of food getting. Even as an adolescent he has assumed considerable responsibility for producing food. As an adult his economic duties are even more insistently sanctioned. An adolescent need only contribute to the support of his father's family, but an adult must produce

[115] [1] The adults of Rumbima hamlet whose behavior was most closely observed were Wof, Marok, War, Kar, Kis, Yat, Way, Waramus, and Mes. Kar, Kis, Yat, and Mes, since they spoke pidgin English, were my best informants on this period. (See household map and lineage chart in chap. I.)

[2] This ceremony should not be confused with either the age-grade or cult initiation ceremonies which occur during adolescence.

[582] [3] In the majority of cases, a boy marries shortly after the scars are healed, so his wedding also corresponds with his entry into adulthood.